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AUTHOR Emmer, Edmund T.
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ABSTRACT

This presentation provides an overview of research on classroom management, emphasizing results from a program of research conducted at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education (University of Texas) during the last 5 years. These studies, along with others, provide a basis for describing important dimensions of teacher behavior that account for well-managed classrooms. Classroom management is viewed as the result of three phases of activity. During the pre-active phase (before students arrive), teachers form expectations for student behavior, plan rules and procedures, prepare the classroom setting, and identify activities for students. In the second phase, at the beginning of the year, teachers communicate expectations, students are socialized into the classroom setting, and procedures and routines for classroom activities are established. During the third phase, the remainder of the year, the classroom system is maintained by careful teacher monitoring, prompt handling of problems, and carefully designed and conducted activities. (TE)

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CURRENT RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Edmund T. Emmer
Research and Development Center
for Teacher Education
The University of Texas at Austin

This presentation* will give an overview of research on classroom management, emphasizing results from a program of research conducted at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education during the past 5 years. These studies, along with other investigations of classroom management, provide a basis for describing important dimensions of teacher behavior that account for well-managed classrooms. It should be emphasized that this is an overview, not a complete description of all classroom management tasks. Thoughtful perspectives on managing classrooms can be found in books edited by Duke (1979, 1982) and in a paper by Brophy (1983). Detailed descriptions of skills for managing elementary classrooms can be found in Evertson, Emmer, Clements, Sanford, and Worsham (1984); and for secondary classrooms, in Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, and Worsham (1984).

We began studying classroom management for several reasons. One was that process/product research conducted at our Center (e.g., see Brophy & Evertson, 1976) had identified effective classroom management as a consistent predictor of student achievement. To illustrate, consider the results of one analysis of a study of 29 seventh- and eighth-grade math teachers (Evertson, Emmer & Brophy, 1980). For this analysis, a subset of three highly effective teachers and six relatively ineffective teachers was identified based on student learning gains over the course of a year on a district-administered achievement test and on the basis of student attitudes as measured by a questionnaire given at the end of the school year to each teacher's students. Extensive observation data were obtained in each class by observers who had no knowledge of any results regarding student achievement or attitude. A comparison of the two sets of teachers on classroom behavior measures indicated numerous significant mean differences ($p < .05$). Examples of variables are listed below:

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Teacher consistently enforces rules;
Amount of disturbance teacher accepts;
Monitoring of class;
Efficiency of transitions;
Students respect teacher;
Amount of productive time; and
Students obey teacher.

Except for the second variable, assessments indicated higher scores for more effective teachers. This sample of the variables which showed differences clearly indicates aspects of teacher behavior that are related to a management function. Not all variables showed differences between the two groups. Assessments on variables listed below showed no differences:

Attractiveness of room;
Democratic leadership;
Teacher socializes with students;
Teacher showmanship;
Emphasis on grades; and
Teacher's command of subject.

Of course, finding no difference between these two groups does not mean that the variables are necessarily unimportant. For example, none of the teachers were judged to have poor command of their subject, so that both groups' assessments in this area were high. The point is simply that the teachers were not different on all variables, but there were reliable differences on variables related to a dimension that can be characterized as classroom management effectiveness.

This result was not an isolated finding. A number of other process/product research studies had also found variables in the domain of classroom management to be related to student learning gains. Summaries of the literature identifying such variables are provided by Medley (1977) and Good (1979).

Another reason for studying classroom management has to do with its centrality to the role of a teacher. A major part of the task of teaching is to manage a classroom; that is, to prepare the setting, to organize activities, to arrange students in that setting, and to engage children in whatever activities are appropriate to master the curriculum objectives (see Doyle, 1979, for an insightful discussion of teacher and student roles in management).

A third reason for studying classroom management is the absence of a unified conception of it in the teacher-preparation curriculum. Courses devoted primarily to classroom management are generally not included in the required teacher-education curriculum, and management tends to be considered diffusely throughout the program. It was hoped that more pragmatic research might build a firmer base for this aspect of teacher education.

Criteria for Effective Management

Our research program and numerous studies of classroom management have used several criteria for judging whether a classroom is effectively managed. The typical approach is to define management in terms of observable student behavior rather than an a priori conception of what an effective manager does. Two types of student behaviors are frequently used. One is the degree of disruptive behavior exhibited by one or more students in a classroom. Disruptive behavior, by definition, interferes with the teacher or other students, and teachers take a very dim view of it. Related variables include: deviant behavior, unsanctioned, off-task behavior, and aggressive behavior. A second type of student behavior frequently used as a criterion in management research is the degree to which students are appropriately engaged in classroom activities. Engagement rate reflects the degree to which students are involved in whatever activities are identified as appropriate for the content or learning objectives in the curriculum. Related terms include: attentive behavior, student involvement, and on-task behavior. Studies that use both criteria simultaneously in classrooms have reported moderate correlations between the two types of variables, suggesting that although related, each variable contains some unique information about the setting. The use of these criteria for effective management, while logically defensible by virtue of the teacher's role in maintaining an orderly and appropriate environment for learning, also has empirical support. These variables have been found to predict student achievement gains (For example, see reviews in Bloom, 1976; Jackson, 1968; and by Hoge and Luce, 1979).

A Conception of Classroom Management Task

Classroom management can be described as a series of activities directed at establishing a setting in which students engage in learning activities designated by the teacher and in which disruptive behavior is kept at a minimum. There are three major phases to the process of establishing and maintaining a well-managed classroom.

Pre-active phase. This phase of classroom management occurs prior to the arrival of students and consists of preparing the physical setting, planning beginning of year activities, and identifying expectations for student behavior and for work requirements.

Beginning the year. The second phase in classroom management occurs when students arrive. During this phase the teacher communicates expectations to students, establishes norms for behavior and work, and establishes routines and procedures for conducting activities. Depending upon the age and grade level of students, this phase may take anywhere from a few days to several weeks to complete.

Remainder of year. In the third phase of classroom management, the emphasis is on maintaining norms for behavior and work. During

this stage the emphasis in management shifts from socialization of students into the classroom setting to designing and conducting activities in ways that keep students actively engaged. Provisions for student success and adapting instruction to meet individual student needs (especially lower-achieving students) are critical in this stage.

No implication is intended that the planning activities in phase one and the norm-setting activities in phase two do not occur at times other than at the beginning of the year. Certainly, new procedures can be introduced at other times, and changes in the physical setting or behavior norms can and do occur. However, our experience in observing many classrooms at the beginning and throughout the year is that, in most cases, the major share of activities in these areas occurs as described above.

Major Components of the Pre-Active Phase

There is a growing research literature dealing with teacher planning and decision making (cf. Shavelson and Stern, 1981). However, most of this literature is descriptive rather than an attempt to identify planning characteristics of teachers identified as effective according to some criteria. Thus, although we regard the pre-active phase of management as important, its processes are revealed only sketchily by research. Generally, teacher planning appears to focus around the identification of suitable classroom activities and be more influenced by the context (i.e., the nature of students, available material) and student motivation or involvement than by learning outcomes. That is, teachers do not plan instruction starting with learning objectives and proceeding systematically to examine methods for attaining those objectives. The research on teacher planning for the beginning of the year is much sparser than research on planning generally, and does not provide a basis for specific recommendations. Descriptive studies have indicated that much teacher activity during the week before school begins is directed at room preparation, reviewing and organizing files and materials, and identifying a schedule of activities. How teachers form expectations for student behavior, decide on what activities are appropriate for beginning of year, and match student work requirements with entering-student capabilities are not researched in the context of beginning of year. One study did examine teacher activities and plans for the first day of school, using 11 relatively inexperienced middle-school teachers (Worsham & Emmer, 1983). In this study teachers had primarily procedural and behavioral concerns (rules and procedures, administrative tasks) for the first day and placed relatively little emphasis on academic or affective components. One interesting finding was that teachers with a more balanced affective and procedural focus had better success in terms of student engagement rates and disruption than teachers who had only a procedural focus on the first day. Affective concerns here refers to activities or plans to make the students feel welcome to the

classroom or become acquainted with the teacher and each other.

Given a sparse literature on effective planning for the beginning of the year, we must infer planning categories from observations of teachers at the beginning of the year. Based on these observations, especially of more effective classroom managers, we can identify a number of areas in which planning should occur and which appear not to be the result of spontaneous teacher behavior. These dimensions are derived mainly from four studies of elementary and junior high teachers (Emmer, Evertson & Anderson, 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements & Martin, 1981; Emmer, Sanford, Clements & Martin, 1982). In these studies about 200 teachers were observed both at the beginning of the year and throughout the year. A variety of observation procedures was used, including frequency counts of behaviors, ratings, extensive narrative descriptions of classroom activities and behavior, and summary ratings and assessments made by observers and readers of the narrative accounts. The categories that appear to discriminate better and poorer managers that are relevant for the beginning of the year include the following:

Room preparation. The key features here are not attractiveness of the room or aspects of decor, but are related to important management considerations, mainly those of monitoring and movement about the room. As will be apparent from a later discussion of teacher management behaviors, the teacher's ability to monitor students is an important component of management. Thus, the room needs to be organized in a way that permits the teacher to observe students easily. This means leaving a clear line of sight from small-group work areas to the rest of the class, avoiding "blind spots" where students can drop from sight, and arranging furniture so that the teacher can easily move about the room to monitor individual students. In addition, students need to be able to see instructional areas without undue turning around or movement, and commonly used materials and areas of the room must be easily accessible.

Although these aspects of room preparation are helpful in creating a setting conducive to good management, we do not wish to overemphasize their importance, nor to produce planning that focuses solely on this aspect of management. Many other aspects of preparing for the beginning of the year require attention.

Identifying expectations for behavior. Teachers need a clear idea of what behaviors are and are not appropriate in their classrooms. Without such expectations, they are subject to the behavioral idiosyncracies of particular students, they run the risk of being inconsistent, and they may allow behaviors to be established that are incompatible with productive use of classroom time. Identifying expectations for behavior is not simply a matter of listing a set of rules for students. Instead, it involves a process of conceptualizing the nature of activities that will occur in the classroom and identifying how students should behave in these activities in order

for a smoothly functioning class to occur. Major categories of activities include: room use, teacher-led instruction including whole-class and small-group instruction, seatwork, student work in groups (as in the laboratory or discussion activities), transitions, and behavior out of the classroom. More effective managers we have observed generally communicate clearer expectations for student behavior in these areas. They frequently do so through establishing specific procedures governing student behavior, that is, by informing students ahead of time what kinds of behaviors are or are not appropriate. To cite some examples, consider expectations for behavior during small-group reading instruction in an elementary classroom. Some critical questions include:

> May students call out, or must they raise their hands in the group?
>
> May students who are not in the group (i.e., who are involved in seatwork) talk, or must they remain silent?
>
> If students out of the group are permitted to talk, what kind of volume control will there be, e.g., whispering or "classroom voice"?
>
> What provisions will be made for students who need help if the teacher is busy?
>
> Under what circumstances may students out of the group leave their seats?
>
> How are students in the group expected to behave?
>
> What should out-of-group students do if they complete their assignments before the end of the activity?
>
> What signal will be used to indicate that another group is being called to the reading-group area?

If the teacher has formed expectations in these areas, then she or he will be in a better position to establish appropriate behavior to begin with, to communicate with students about what they are expected to do, and to prevent problems from occurring. In addition, if the teacher has thought through expectations in these areas, then the teacher is in a better position to monitor students and help them learn how to behave. Time and space do not permit a detailed analysis of each of these major areas. Such discussion can be found in references provided at the end of the paper. From our interviews with teachers it is clear that these expectations for student behavior are not developed in a short period of time. In addition, some teachers, even those with substantial experience, never develop really efficient procedures in certain areas. Their overall management skills are adequate to carry them through without major

problems, but they could benefit from knowledge about other ways to deal with certain aspects of their classroom and its activities.

Managing student work. In addition to expectations for student behavior described in the preceding section, more effective managers usually have clearer expectations for student work. The areas in which these expectations are manifest include the following:

Communicating assignments and work requirements;
Monitoring student progress and completion of assignments;
Provisions for feedback for students.

Within these three major areas specific work requirements vary depending upon the age/grade level of the students and the subject matter being taught. As in the case of procedures and expectations for behavior, specific aspects of managing student work can require careful and thoughtful planning. For example, in the area of communicating assignments, some provision needs to be made for letting students know what the assignments are, such as by posting them in a specific place, developing procedures that will be applicable to a variety of assignments, such as appropriate heading, standards for work, and expectations for incomplete or make-up assignments. In addition, some provision must be made for absent students, identifying what work they missed that must be made up, and for getting any extra help they need.

Establishing appropriate expectations in these areas and developing classroom procedures for managing student work have several important management functions. The expectations reduce uncertainty for the students and provide them with cues for appropriate behavior. Once students have learned the behaviors expected of them, teachers can initiate work activities quickly without needing to explain or spend large amounts of time on procedural details each time. Finally, these procedures simplify the environment for both teachers and students. The reduced complexity means a greater change of smoothly running activities with minimal distractions or interruptions.

Consequences. A fourth major category for planning is deciding upon the consequences for students of their behavior and work in the classroom. We will deal with consequences more fully in the section under the third management phase. However, teachers who plan to utilize extensive reward or penalty systems or who teach in schools where school-wide systems are in effect, must plan their use of these systems carefully. Specifically, the particular rewards and penalties that will be used need to be associated with the specific behaviors for which they will act as consequences.

Beginning the School Year

It is helpful to think of the beginning of the school year as having three major and complementary goals. The first is to acclimate students to their new setting while providing them with a sense of security and lessened anxiety about their ability to perform and to learn. This goal is especially important for younger children and for students with a history of difficulty in academic work. The second goal is to establish an academic content focus so that students accept learning activities as the major purpose for being in school. The third goal is to promote the acceptance of norms for appropriate behavior. In our studies of classroom management, more effective classroom managers have used the first few days of class to state some general expectations, commonly in the context of a discussion or rules for the classroom. In addition, these teachers tend to teach classroom procedures gradually over a period of days or weeks, giving careful explanations of what is expected of students. Examples of areas in which these expectations are communicated were presented in preceding sections. These procedures are usually presented in the context of the activity in which they will be used, rather than taught as isolated components. With younger students, teaching procedures can involve rehearsal or demonstration by the teacher. At all grades, teachers monitor students and give feedback as they begin using procedures. Feedback tends to be focused on whether the students are performing the desired behavior correctly. Not doing so tends to be dealt with supportively by giving further directions to the students or by otherwise helping them understand what is desired. At the elementary level, the communication of expectations and establishment of procedures and appropriate behavior is generally done during the first two weeks of the school year. At early grade levels teachers frequently indicate that it takes three or four weeks before the class has settled into the routines and structure. At the secondary level expectations about work requirements and related matters tend to be more dominant and communicated during the first week of instruction. Expectations for behavior in major procedural areas are still communicated and are important for the conduct of instruction, but usually take less time--students at this level, after all, have participated in school experiences for many years. Teachers at the secondary level typically rely on clear explanations of expectations and prompt feedback to students if they engage in inappropriate behavior, rather than rehearsal or demonstration of behavioral procedures.

Activities at the beginning of the year are, for the most part, content-based but are usually characterized by low risk and high levels of student success. Activities tend to be whole-class focused (teacher-led instruction or seatwork), rather than small groups, individualized, or complex organizational patterns. Whole-class activities enable the teacher to monitor students readily and do not involve the use of complex procedures which might be difficult to teach, in addition to other procedures which must be learned at the beginning of the year. Moreover, activities that are relatively easy

reduce the likelihood of failure and also minimize demands on the teacher's time and attention.

Teacher behavior during the beginning of school in more effectively-managed classes can be characterized by a "take charge" leadership style. These teachers tend to be "front and center" and to maintain contact with students. They are the main source of information about what students are expected to do and they stay actively involved with the students, either by providing directions and instruction, or by monitoring. This does not mean that such teachers behave in a domineering fashion or appear unmindful of students' concerns. In fact, Moskowitz and Hayman (1976) found in their comparison of the first day of teachers rate as "best" by their students compared to first-year teachers, that the best teachers were more accepting of student feelings and ideas on the first day and smiled and joked more. In our studies, poor managers were more likely to give students difficult assignments in the first few days, work at their desks without giving students adequate information or help, fail to monitor students, and otherwise lose contact with the class as a whole (e.g., by spending large amounts of time with individual students).

Phase Three: Maintaining the Management Systems

The remainder of the school year, after students have been initially socialized into the classroom setting, can be viewed as primarily one of maintenance. This, of course, is an oversimplification because aspects of the management system can change and therefore require introduction of new procedures and reorientation of students.

The maintenance of a classroom management system is an active process. A number of characteristics in this process have been identified. Most of these features of effective management are also identifiable during the beginning-of-the-year phase and help establish appropriate behavior to begin with. However, they come to the fore during the maintenance phase and are the primary means by which the classroom system functions smoothly. Without these characteristics, even the most thoughtfully composed set of expectations and the most carefully planned classroom procedures for managing student behavior and work will not be sustained throughout the year. In other words, "well begun" is only half-done.

Monitoring. A major characteristic discriminating more and less effective classroom managers is their monitoring of student behavior, both with respect to following classroom rules and procedures as well as academic performance. Careful monitoring enables the teacher to detect problems in early stages before they develop into major difficulties. Monitoring also gives students quicker access to assistance when they need it. This skill is an important part of the teacher variable Kounin (1070) labeled "withitness," which was operation-

alized as the percentage of teacher "desists" which were correctly targeted and timely (i.e., dealt with the inappropriate behavior before it escalated or spread to other students). This variable was strongly correlated with the degree of on-task student behavior and negatively correlated with amount of deviant behavior.

Prompt handling of inappropriate behavior. A related characteristic to monitoring and another part of "withitness" is prompt handling of inappropriate behavior. Compared to less effective managers, better managers tend to deal with inappropriate behavior rather than ignore it. This component is affected by the teacher's monitoring skills and also because better managers' preventive strategies tend to limit the amount of inappropriate behavior in the first place. It simply is easier to deal with inappropriate behavior when it occurs occasionally than when it is occurring frequently. High rates of inappropriate behavior put the teacher in a dilemma: to deal with the individual behaviors will cause constant interruptions of whole-class or group activities; to ignore the behaviors results in many students not attending to lessons and not understanding the tasks they must do. This is another reason for the importance of establishing a well-managed setting to begin with; it is obviously much easier to maintain a setting in which students are, by and large, behaving appropriately than it is to redirect student behavior that exhibits high levels of disruption of non-involvement.

Procedures for dealing with inappropriate behavior used by better managers tend to be relatively simple and unobtrusive. Thus, it is extremely rare to observe a teacher stopping an ongoing classroom activity to have a conference with an individual student. Likewise, frequent use of penalties is rarely seen. Instead, these teachers rely upon simple procedures, such as focusing class attention on the ongoing task, redirecting student behavior to appropriate activities, citing procedures that students should follow, making eye contact, or simply issuing a mild desist statement, such as mentioning the student's name or asking him or her to stop whatever the inappropriate behavior is.

Reward and feedback systems. Another important component of classroom management for maintaining student behavior is a set of consequences, both rewards and penalties. This area is probably the most researched aspect of management, although much of the literature tends to be small-scale behavior modification studies outside regular classroom settings. Enough of this research has been conducted in regular settings, however, to allow us some confidence in identifying characteristics that can be helpful in maintaining appropriate student behavior.

A commonly occurring consequence is that of teacher approval, recognition, or praise (see Brophy, 1981, for a good review of this area). Recent research has suggested that the effects of teacher approval depend on the student's interpretation of it, and that it is probably most effective when directed at student accomplishment and

effort. If students interpret teacher approval as attempting to control them, then it is not likely to have the desired effect, especially with older children and adolescents. In our observations of classrooms we have noted different levels of reward-and-penalty systems in terms of the amount of effort which teachers are required to expend in establishing and utilizing these systems. The least complex systems are those which rely mainly on teacher approval and the use of grades. Moderate systems involve the use of rewards, such as privileges, recognition awards, such as honor students, badges, and certificates. The most complex systems involve the use of some kind of token economy or chip system which identify specific behaviors that are rewarded and in which students or the class receive rewards based upon their accumulation of tokens. In a similar manner, penalty systems can range from simple to complex. Simple systems utilize the witholding of privileges and teacher disapproval for inappropriate behavior and reductions in grades for poor work. More complex systems can utilize response cost strategies, removal of students from desired activities, as well as a tiered system of time out, contracts, and suspensions. We have observed effective managers using very simple systems as well as complex systems in both areas. Thus, a blanket endorsement of one or another type of reward or penalty system does not seem appropriate. It appears that a minimal system can be used with good effect, but that more complex systems may be helpful in dealing with special problems, such as a class with many students who have poor motivation for academic work or who have experienced considerable prior failure or difficulty in the subject. What does appear to be important, whatever system is used, is that it be used consistently and that students understand what behaviors are rewarded or penalized. Inconsistency, especially in the use of penalties, can quickly undermine complex systems and result in high rates of inappropriate behavior. As several researchers have noted (Sawin and Parke, 1979; Parke and Deur, 1972), inconsistent use of punishment can result in very high levels of aggressive behavior.

Activity structures. Activities can be regarded as a basic unit of classroom life. Doyle (1979, p. 47) notes that "Teachers encounter classrooms as units of time to be filled with activities that can be justified educationally and as groups of students who vary widely in aptitude and propensities for such activities." Student and teacher behavior occurs in the context of classroom activities (or in transitions between activities). Thus, the design and conduct of activities is a critical task for teachers and has great impact on the overall success of the classroom management system.

Important aspects of whole-class and group instruction activities include the degree of clarity of teacher directions and instruction, the pacing of activities to maintain student involvement, and the smoothness (see Kounin 1970) of activities, that is, the degree to which they are free from intrusions and interruptions. In seatwork activities, the match of task- demands to the students' abilities to perform the tasks is an important factor in maintaining

involvement, especially the degree to which materials and activities accommodate lower-achieving students. Another variable identified by Kounin as important for maintaining involvement in seatwork activities is the degree of variety and challenge in the tasks. Finally, the continuity of signals in the activity itself (Kounin & Doyle, 1975; Kounin & Gump, 1974) is important for maintaining involvement. Continuity refers to the degree to which the activity contains, or the teacher provides, prompts, or cues that help students identify next steps. In addition, poor results occur when teachers spend large amounts of time with individual students (Scott & Bushell, 1974). No doubt this reflects both the difficulties in monitoring a whole class when the teacher works with individual students, as well as problems in adapting instruction for particular kinds of students in the class. Finally, transitions between activities or at the beginning and end of a period or day can also be a source of management problems. Arlin (1979) found that the rates of off-task behavior were higher during transitions than during other classroom activities. He also found that when teachers structured transitions (for example, gave students directions about what they were to do, or had a routine for the transition), the inappropriate behavior was no higher than during regular classroom activities.

Summary

Classroom management is viewed as the result of three phases of activity. During a pre-active phase before students arrive, teachers form expectations for student behavior, plan rules and procedures, prepare the classroom setting, and identify initial activities for students. A second phase begins when students arrive and continues for up to several weeks, depending upon the age/grade level of the students. During the beginning-of-year phase, teacher expectations are communicated, students are socialized into the classroom setting, and procedures and routines for classroom activities are begun. During the third phase, occurring throughout the year, the classroom system is maintained by careful teacher monitoring, prompt handling of problems, and carefully designed and conducted activities.

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